



Planning Department

Memorandum

DATE: August 7, 2006

TO: Mayor Pierce and Members of the Redwood City City Council

FROM: Rosanne Foust, General Plan Liaison to the City Council
Tom Passanisi, Principal Planner

SUBJECT: Parks and Open Space Element and Conservation Element

RECOMMENDATION:

Review and discuss concepts in the attached General Plan Elements and refer the Elements back to the Planning Commission for detailed review. This action is only to provide an update and “check-in”, and allow the Council to affirm the direction and approach to these Elements.

BACKGROUND

Planning staff has been working on the General Plan update for the last several years. There have been numerous community meetings and discussions on the guiding principles and the future story of Redwood City. Staff has written several of the Elements, and the Planning Commission has held two public hearings each on the Parks and Open Space Element and the Conservation Element. Both of the Elements are attached under separate cover¹.

At this time the City Council is not being asked to adopt the elements or substantially discuss the details of the documents. Rather staff wants to simply provide an update and affirm direction and approach on the *concepts*. If there is some goal and policy that does not seem appropriate or something is missing then staff would appreciate the feedback. We first intend to work out the details at the Planning Commission level and then bring the entire General Plan back to you for formal review and adoption. This approach will essentially be the process for all the thirteen elements.

The General Plan process consists of several steps. First the Planning Commission reviews the documents as they are written by staff. Following Planning Commission’s review and public hearings, the General Plan Liaison to the City Council then brings forward the Elements to “check-in” and inform the City Council (one or two elements at a time). Council then comments on each document and confirm that staff is generally on the right track.

¹ Staff has added graphics and maps to the Parks and Open Space Element for illustrative purposes only. The actual final graphics and maps for each Element will be inserted prior to Planning Commission and City Council comprehensive review of the entire General Plan.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The Parks and Open Space Element is one of the required State mandated Elements of the General Plan. It is supposed to guide the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of open space. The policies and goals in the Element reflect one of the approved guiding principles:

Plan for sustainability within our finite resources, including but not limited to open space, water, energy, and air quality.

Some of the highlights of the Element include:

- It classifies parks into six basic categories: Active Parkland, Social Spaces, Community Gardens, Trail-Oriented Recreation, and Water-oriented Open Space with goals and policies on each.
- It makes reference to and is consistent with the Parks, Recreation, and Community services Department Strategic Plan.
- Recognizes the importance and need for the preservation of natural resources (similar to the Conservation Element).

CONSERVATION ELEMENT

The Conservation Element is also one of the required State mandated Elements of the General Plan. It provides direction regarding the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources. It somewhat overlaps with the Parks and Open Space Element, but the Conservation Element is distinguished by being primarily oriented toward natural resources. This Element also reflects the same guiding principle mentioned above for the Parks and Open Space Element.

The Element incorporates goals and polices which address the following environmental issues:

- Preserving and improving air and water quality
- Protecting and “daylighting” creeks where appropriate
- Preserving habitat and biological resources
- Conserving Energy

NEXT STEPS

Following your discussion and general direction, these elements will then be formally compiled and packaged together for additional review by the Planning Commission and ultimately for review again by the City Council. The next set of Elements that will be forward to you for conceptual review will be the Water Supply Element and Infrastructure Elements. Those will by presented to you at your meeting on September 11, 2006.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Parks and Open Space Element
2. Conservation Element

